

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5703

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3257

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, SN

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE MISSION TO FOUR ASEAN CAPITALS

DURING DINNER I GAVE FOR VISITING PROFESSORS SCALAPINO AND VOGEL ON JULY 2, FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM MADE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST CONCERNING FORTHCOMING VISIT OF VIETNAMESE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TO ALL THE ASEAN COUNTRIES EXCEPT THAILAND:

A. WHILE ATTENDING ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTER MEETING IN MANILA RELIABLE SOURCE HAD INFORMED HIM THAT HANOI WOULD SHORTLY ANNOUNCE THE VISIT, BUT WOULD IMPLY THAT THE VISIT WAS IN RESPONSE TO INVITATIONS FROM THE ASEAN COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION TO BEING UNTRUE (SINCE THE VIETNAMESE HAD SOLICITED THE VISIT), THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN BAD PSYCHOLOGICALLY SINCE IT WOULD HAVE CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WERE PERHAPS OVERLY EAGER TO CULTIVATE THE DRV. THEREFORE, HE HAD ANNOUNCED THE VISIT TO THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION IN MANILA MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE INITIATIVE HAD COME FROM HANOI.

B. HE SAID VIETNAMESE HAD WANTED TO BRING PEOPLE WITH THEM TO
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ESTABLISH A DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN SINGAPORE, BUT THE GOS HAD

REFUSED TO PERMIT THIS SAYING IT WOULD BE BETTER FIRST TO DISCUSS THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS INCLUDING SIZE, ETC. SINGAPORE WOULD INSIST THAT HANOI CEASE ITS ATTACKS AGAINST ASEAN AND INDICATE A DISPOSITION TO ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE BEFORE GOS WOULD AGREE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMBASSY. GOS COULD NOT INSIST THAT HANOI SUPPORT ASEAN, BUT IT WOULD REQUIRE THE DRV TO DROP ITS HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD ASEAN (EARLIER IN THE DAY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF MFA TAN BOON SENG HAD ADVISED THE DCM OF THIS POSITION, AND INDICATED THAT INITIALLY THE DRV HAD PROPOSED BRINGING SEVEN ADDITIONAL PERSONS WITH THE DELEGATION WHO WOULD BE LEFT IN SINGAPORE TO SET UP AN EMBASSY. AS RAJARATNAM CONFIRMED GOS HAD REFUSED TO AGREE TO THIS AND HAD INSISTED THAT DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT ON TERMS AND CONDITION PRECEDE THE ACTUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMBASSY).

C. RAJARATNAM INDICATED THAT HE HAD URGED HIS COLLEAGUES TO TAKE A SIMILAR COOL APPROACH TO THE VISITING VIETNAMESE MISSION. HE NOTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE WOULD NOT BE VISITING THAILAND AND FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES AVOID ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS IN DEVELOPING THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE DRV WHICH WOULD SERVE TO ISOLATE THAILAND. HE THOUGHT (BUT DID NOT SEEM ABSOLUTELY SURE) THAT THE OTHER ASEAN GOVERNMENTS HAD AGREED TO THIS. CONSEQUENTLY THE ASEAN COMMUNIQUE HAD MADE ONLY AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM, AND REFRAINED FROM EXPRESSING OBSEQUIOUS OVERTURES WHICH WOULD CONVEY THE WRONG SIGNAL TO HANOI. HOLDRIDGE

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